

Area under organic farming increased by 7.4% between 2007 and 2008 in the EU-27

The increase of 7.4% in the total area under organic farming between 2007 and 2008 illustrates the continuing positive trend in the organic sector in the EU-27. In 2007, the area under organic farming accounted for 4.1% of the Total Utilised Agricultural Area.

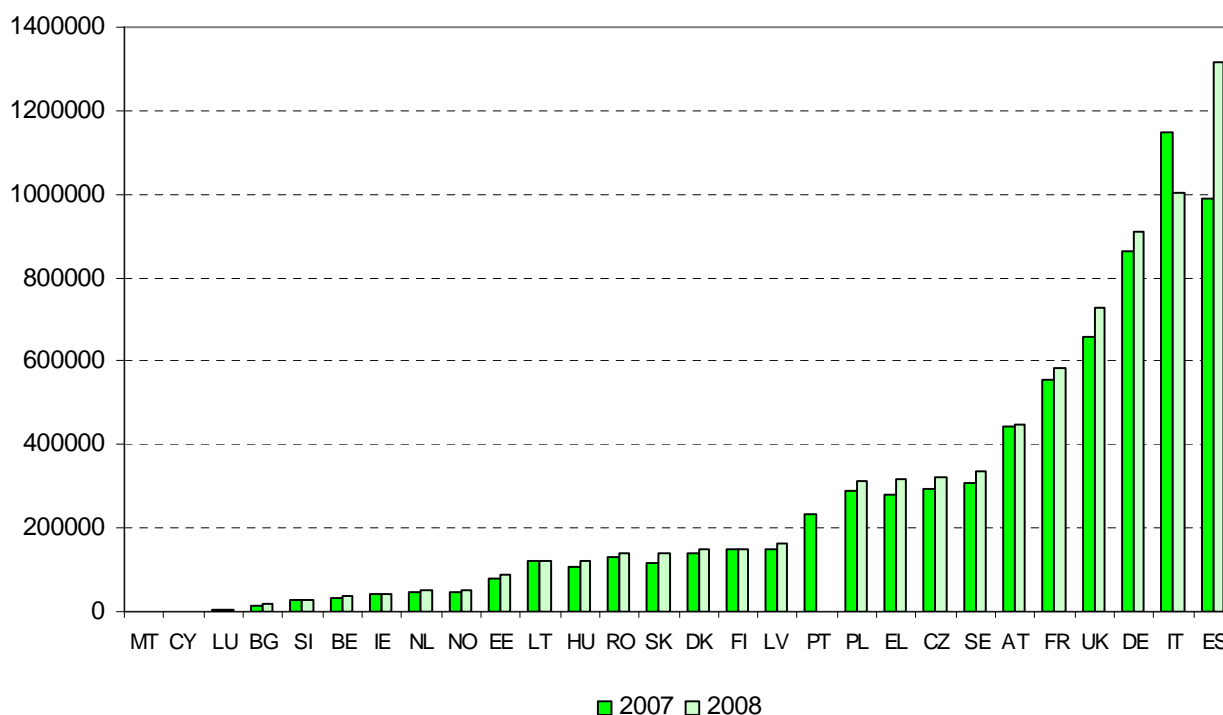
Between 2007 and 2008, the number of producers (agricultural holdings) using organic farming methods within EU-27 rose by 9.5%.

Cattle and sheep are the most popular species reared using such methods.

The main industrial activities in the organic sector are the processing and preserving of meat and the production of meat products as well as the processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables.

The aim of this publication is to describe the situation of the organic sector in 2008 and the more recent developments, paying particular attention to organic farming. Wherever possible, it also includes comparisons with and references to agriculture as a whole.

Figure 1: Total organic area (fully converted and under conversion) by country, 2007 (1) and 2008 (2) (ha)



(1) DK, MT, data 2006; (2) CY, MT, PT no data available
Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg1](#))

Total organic area is still increasing in the EU-27 and Norway

The total organic area in EU-27 (i.e. the fully converted area and area under conversion) continues to show an upward trend. The increase in area between 2007 and 2008 was 7.4%, as compared with 5.9% between 2006 and 2007.

From 2007 to 2008, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom recorded growth of over 10 %. Although Italy led the European Union in the organic farming sector in recent years, the area under organic crops in Italy actually fell by 12.9 %.

During the same period, the organic area in Spain increased by 33.3% (see Table 1).

The size of the organic area differs considerably from one Member State to another. In terms of the total organic area of each Member State as a share out of the total organic area in EU-27, 4 countries together accounted for around 50% in 2008: the United Kingdom (9.4%), Germany (11.7%), Italy (12.9%) and Spain (17.0%) (see Figure 2).

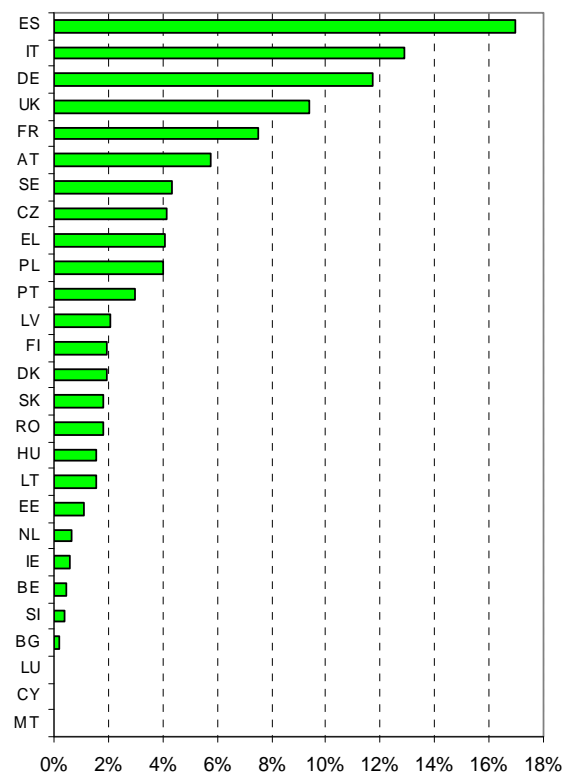
Table 1: Total organic area (fully converted and under conversion), 2008 (ha) and % changes 2007-2008

	Organic area (ha) (1) 2008	% changes 2007-2008
EU-27	7 764 722	7.4
BE	36 153	10.8
BG	16 663	22.1
CZ	320 311	9.1
DK	150 104	8.7
DE	907 786	4.9
EE	87 346	9.8
IE	42 816	4.1
EL	317 824	13.6
ES	1 317 539	33.3
FR	583 799	4.8
IT	1 002 414	-12.9
CY	2 323	:
LV	161 624	9.1
LT	122 200	1.5
LU	3 535	5.0
HU	122 817	15.0
MT	20	:
NL	50 434	7.3
AT	447 678	0.6
PL	313 944	8.5
PT	233 475	:
RO	140 132	6.6
SI	29 836	1.8
SK	140 755	19.4
FI	150 374	1.1
SE	336 439	9.1
UK	726 381	10.0
NO	52 248	6.9

(1) MT data 2006., CY, PT data 2007

Source: Eurostat ([food in porq1](#))

Figure 2: Share of EU-27 total organic area (fully converted and under conversion), 2008 (%) (2)



(2) MT data 2006, CY, PT data 2007

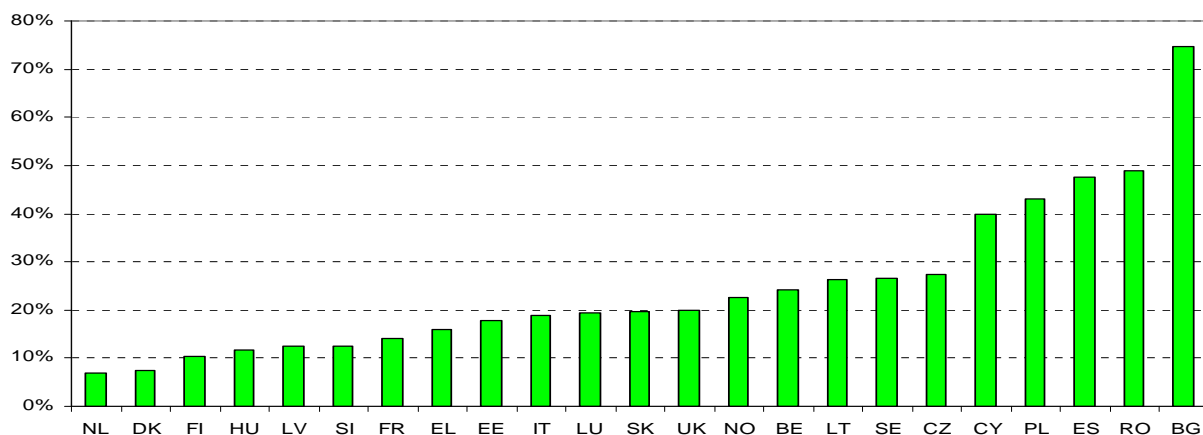
Source: Eurostat ([food in porq1](#))

There are considerable differences between Member States in terms of the potential for growth in the area of organic production

Organic production comes from fully converted areas. Before an area can be considered as 'organic', it must undergo a conversion process. The total organic area is the sum of the 'area under conversion' and the 'fully converted area'. The area under conversion as a percentage of the total organic area can give an indication of the potential growth in the organic sector in the years to come. Data on the area under conversion are available for

22 Member States and Norway. For these countries the difference in the potential for an increase in organic area is considerable (see Figure 3). In 2008, half of the countries had shares of between 10% and 20%. The Netherlands and Denmark had shares of less than 10%, and there were 4 countries whose share exceeded 40%: Poland (43.1%), Spain (47.6%), Romania (48.9%) and Bulgaria (74.6%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Share of area under conversion in total organic area (fully converted and under conversion), 2008 (%) (1)



(1) DE, IE, MT, AT, PT no data available; CY, LU data 2007

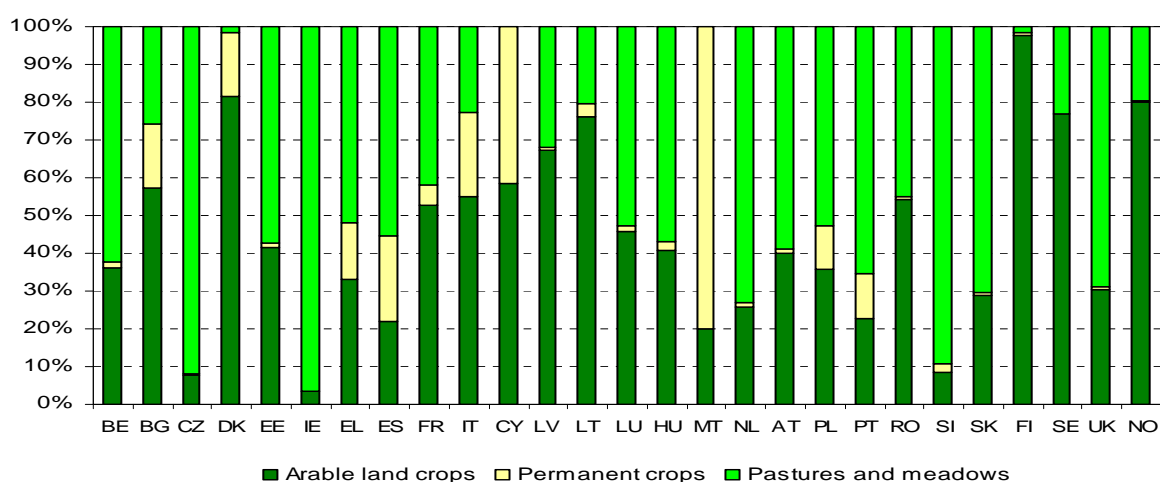
Source: Eurostat ([food in_porg1](#))

Arable crops, permanent crops and pastures/ meadows are the main crop types in the organic sector

The three main crop types grown organically are arable land crops (mainly cereals, fresh vegetables, green fodder and industrial crops), permanent crops (mainly fruit trees and berries, olive groves and vineyards) and pastures and meadowland. In most of the Member States and Norway, permanent crops account for a relatively insignificant share of the fully converted area of these three main types (less than 5%). In 2008, permanent crops accounted for between 10% and 20% in Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Poland and Portugal, while in Spain and Italy the share was

over 20%. Cyprus and Malta were in the lead with 41% and 80% respectively. Olive trees predominate in both countries. In 11 countries (including Norway) arable land crops accounted for the largest share of the land area (> 50%), while in 15 countries pastures and meadows predominated (>50%). Arable crops were significant in Finland and Norway with shares of 98% and 80% respectively, while the Czech Republic (92%), Ireland (96%) and Slovenia (89%) were in the lead in terms of pastures and meadows (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Share of arable land crops, permanent crops and pastures and meadows in fully converted area, 2008 (%) (1)



(1) MT data 2006, CY, PT data 2007; DE no data available; IE, ES share in total organic area

Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg1](#))

Among the arable crops, cereals and green fodder occupied the biggest area. In most of the Member States and Norway, these two categories together accounted for more than 80% of the fully converted area in 2008. Lithuania had the highest share of cereals among the Member States (79.0%) and Latvia the highest share for green fodder

(67.2%). In Norway the share of green fodder was even higher, at 75.3%. Bulgaria, with 67.8%, accounted for a very large share of industrial crops. The shares of fresh vegetables in Ireland (26.7%), the Netherlands (35.2%) and Malta (50.0%) are significant (see Table 2).

Table 2: Fully converted areas of total arable land crops and shares of main arable land crops, 2008 (2)

	Total arable land crops (ha)	Cereals (%)	Industrial crops (%)	Fresh vegetables (%)	Green fodder (%)	Other arable land crops (%)
BE	9 807	30.0	1.0	5.0	54.0	10.0
BG	2 151	8.6	67.8	10.0	7.0	6.6
CZ	17 788	57.1	3.0	1.7	30.6	7.7
DK	112 675	36.7	0.4	1.6	56.9	4.4
DE	:	:	:	:	:	:
EE	29 186	31.7	1.4	0.2	65.7	0.8
IE	1 500	72.7	0.7	26.7	0.0	0.0
EL	88 046	44.8	4.8	3.2	47.1	0.1
ES	230 646	54.6	3.6	3.2	29.0	9.6
FR	247 238	33.9	7.2	3.3	46.9	8.7
IT	430 293	45.8	3.2	6.2	39.1	5.7
CY	685	41.6	2.6	1.6	0.0	54.2
LV	92 243	29.0	1.0	0.3	67.2	2.5
LT	67 485	79.0	2.1	0.1	1.0	17.7
LU	1 172	44.2	0.6	1.0	42.3	11.9
HU	41 336	54.0	16.0	3.2	22.0	4.7
MT	4	0.0	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0
NL	11 713	49.8	2.7	35.2	0.0	12.2
AT	149 110	55.3	3.9	1.6	30.4	8.9
PL	63 905	63.3	2.3	5.0	24.2	5.3
PT	51 433	74.7	0.1	1.9	23.3	0.0
RO	37 882	66.8	26.9	0.4	4.3	1.6
SI	2 189	33.4	2.6	4.1	56.6	3.3
SK	32 452	35.4	5.9	0.6	54.3	3.9
FI	114 350	34.8	1.9	0.3	57.4	5.6
SE	184 727	33.5	1.5	0.4	57.7	6.9
UK	175 380	27.2	0.4	8.4	56.8	7.2
NO	31 088	19.9	0.1	0.8	75.3	3.9

(2) MT data 2006, CY, PT data 2007; DE no data available; IE, ES arable land crops in total organic area

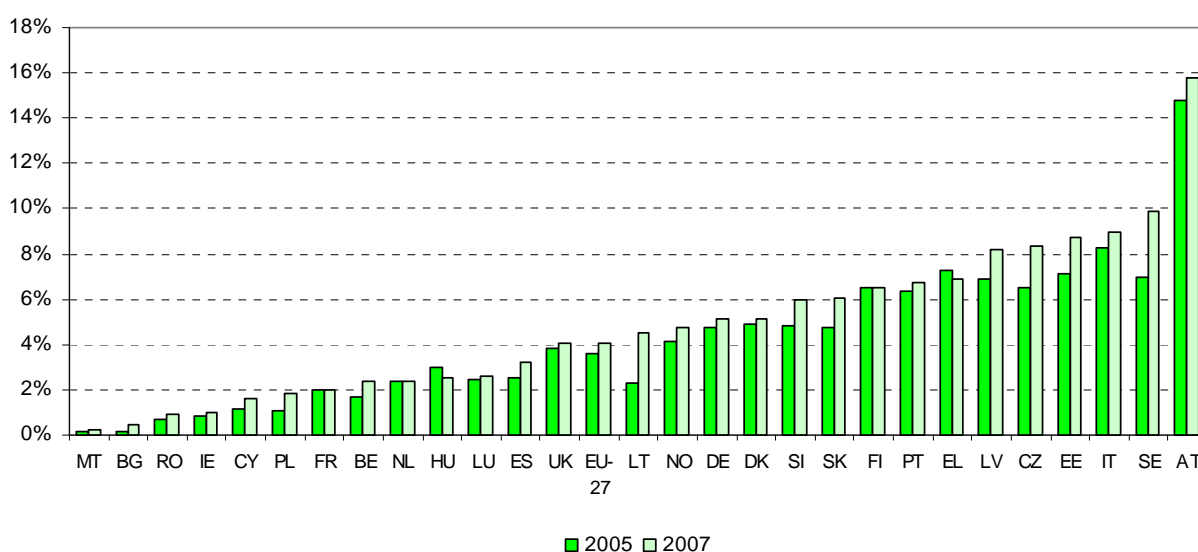
Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg1](#))

Organic area accounted for 4.1% of the total EU-27 Utilised Agricultural Area in 2007

From 2005 to 2007, the total organic area (i.e. fully converted area plus area under conversion) as a percentage of the total Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) within the EU-27 rose from 3.6 % to 4.1 %. Figure 5 shows the organic crop area as a percentage of the total Utilised Agricultural Area by country for 2005 and 2007. Hungary and Greece recorded slight decreases between 2005 and 2007.

In Denmark and Sweden which had seen decreases during the period 2003 to 2005, the percentage share of organic area started to pick up again, increasing from 4.9 % to 5.1 % in Denmark and from 7.0 % to 9.9 % in Sweden. Austria, with 15.7 % of the total agricultural area, remained in the lead.

Figure 5: Share of total organic area (fully converted and under conversion) in Total Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA), 2005 (1) and 2007 (2)(%)



(1) LU data 2004, BG, data 2006; (2) DK, MT data 2006
Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg1](#), [ef_ov_kvaaesu](#))

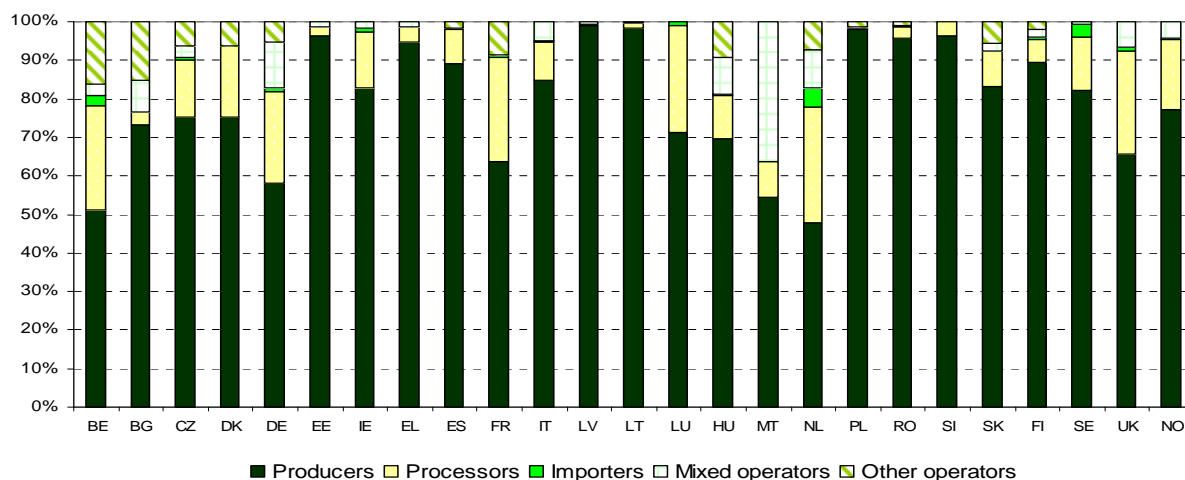
Producers and processors are the most numerous organic operators

Activities within the organic sector include the food chain from production at farm level right through to industrial processing. Imports, exports and other activities, such as wholesale and retail trade, are also included.

The production of organic crops and the rearing of organic animals are the main activities in the

organic sector at farm level, but the processing of goods is also important. Producers accounted for over 50% of all operators in 2008 in all the Member States and Norway, and even exceeded 70% in most countries. Importers accounted for less than 2% of the total in most of the Member States (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Share of different types of operators in total organic operators, 2008 (%) (1)



(1) MT data 2006, CY, PT data 2007

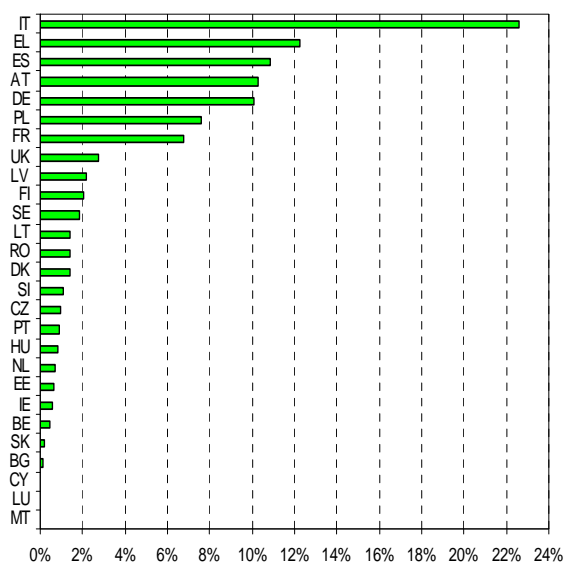
Source: Eurostat ([food_act2](#))

The number of organic producers rose by 9.5% between 2007 and 2008

In 2008, there were a total of 196 200 organic producers in the EU-27. Germany, Greece, Spain and Austria each accounted for over 10% of the EU-27 total, with Italy out in front on 22.6%. In 12 countries the share was less than 1% (see Figure 7).

Between 2007 and 2008 the number of organic producers in the EU-27 rose by 9.5%. The highest rate of increase, 40.2%, was in the Czech Republic. In 6 countries (Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Finland and the United Kingdom) falls were registered, ranging from -0.9% in Lithuania to as much as -13.4% in Romania (see Table 3).

Figure 7: Share of organic producers by country in EU-27 total, 2008 (%) (2)



(2) CY data 2004, MT data 2006, PT data 2007

Source: Eurostat ([food_act2](#))

Table 3: Number of organic producers 2008, % changes 2007-2008

	Organic producers 2008 (3)	% changes 2007-2008
EU-27	196 200	9.5
BE	869	5.3
BG	254	5.8
CZ	1 842	40.2
DK	2 753	-3.1
DE	19 813	5.9
EE	1 259	3.2
IE	1 185	3.9
EL	24 057	1.2
ES	21 291	16.8
FR	13 298	11.0
IT	44 371	-1.9
CY	159	:
LV	4 203	2.3
LT	2 797	-0.9
LU	85	4.9
HU	1 614	0.1
MT	10	:
NL	1 402	2.0
AT	20 102	0.5
PL	14 888	:
PT	1 696	:
RO	2 775	-13.4
SI	2 067	3.4
SK	350	25.0
FI	3 991	-1.2
SE	3 686	29.4
UK	5 383	-2.2
NO	2 702	3.5

(3) CY data 2004, MT data 2006, PT data 2007, PL no data 2007 available

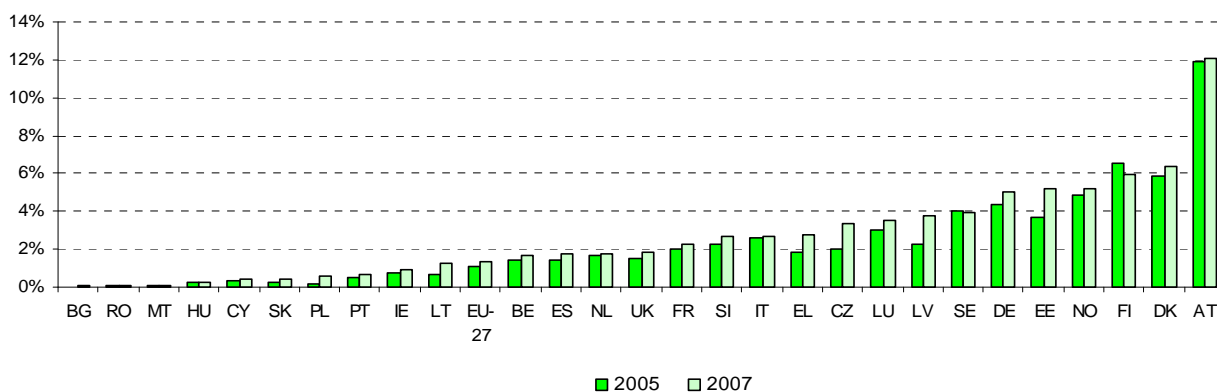
Source: Eurostat ([food_act2](#))

In 2007, 1.3% of all agricultural holdings were certified organic

Although the share of organic producers in total agricultural holdings within the EU-27 showed only a very slight increase between 2005 and 2007 (from 1.2 % to 1.3%), nearly all Member States posted an upward trend. This was similar to the situation in the areas under organic production. In 2007, Bulgaria, Ireland, Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia each

accounted for a share of less than 1%. Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Austria and Finland posted shares over 5%, while Austria led with 12.1%. Only Sweden and Finland reported a fall in their shares, although Finland still managed to reach 5.9%. In Norway, too, the share was slightly over 5% (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Organic producers in total agricultural holdings, 2005 (1) and 2007 (2) (%)



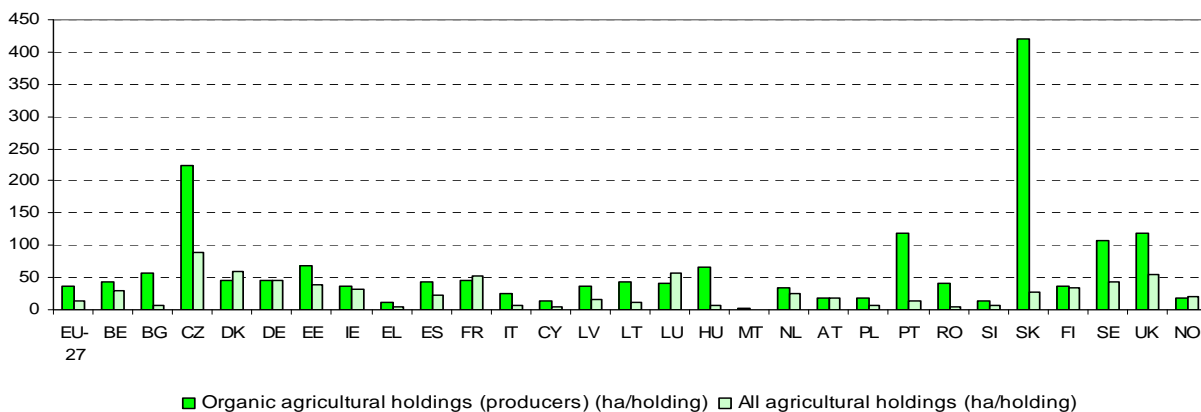
(1) Organic producers: CY, PL data 2004; (2) Organic producers: MT data 2006, PL data 2008
Source: Eurostat ([food_act2](#), [ef_ov_kvaesu](#))

Average size of agricultural holdings in general is larger in the organic sector

The average size of organic agricultural holdings in 2007 was 37 ha for the EU-27 as a whole, compared to 13 ha for all agricultural holdings. In general, the average size of holdings in the organic sector was larger in most of the Member States and smaller only in Denmark, France and Luxembourg. The most noticeable differences

were seen in the Czech Republic (223 ha compared to 89 ha) and Slovakia (421 ha compared to 28 ha), (see Figure 9). One possible reason for these sometimes big differences is the use of a more extensive method of farming within the organic sector.

Figure 9: Average size of agricultural holdings, 2007 (ha/holding) (3)



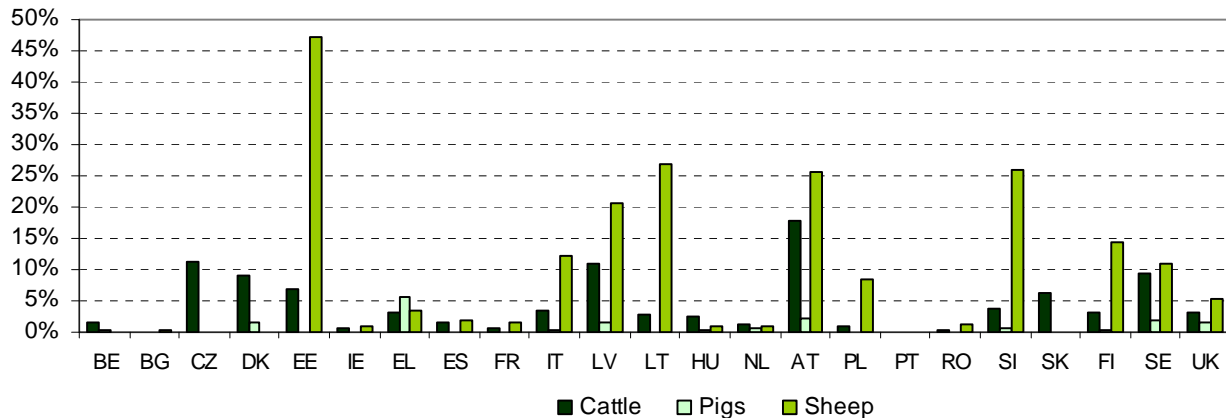
(3) Organic area: DK, MT data 2006; Organic holdings: MT data 2006, PL data 2008
Source: Eurostat ([food_act2](#), [food_in_porg1](#), [ef_ov_kvaesu](#))

Organic livestock: Cattle and sheep are the most popular species

The 2008 figures for organic livestock as a share of all livestock showed that, with respect to cattle, pigs and sheep, some Member States using organic methods were producing remarkably large numbers of animals, cattle and sheep being the most popular. In Austria, 25.7% of the sheep were reared using organic production methods, but

organically reared cattle also achieved a noteworthy 17.7% share, the highest in the whole EU-27. Estonia had the highest percentage of the sheep population with 47.3%. As for organically reared pigs, they accounted for less than 1% in most of the Member States (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Organic livestock out of all livestock, 2008 (Number of heads) (1)



(1) Data on organic livestock: DE, CY, LU, MT no data available; PT all data 2005

Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg3](#), [apro_mt_lscat1](#), [apro_mt_lspig](#), [apro_mt_lssheep](#))

Table 4: Organic livestock 2008, % changes 2007-2008

	Organic livestock 2008 (Number of heads) (2)			% changes 2007-2008		
	Cattle	Pigs	Sheep	Cattle	Pigs	Sheep
BE	43 026	11 863	11 276	13.5	3.7	-11.1
BG	470	0	2 471	19.0	0.0	46.2
CZ	151 723	1 569	64 559	10.4	-14.9	9.5
DK	141 896	182 449	13 394	:	:	:
DE	:	:	:	:	:	:
EE	16 131	252	29 494	17.1	-1.6	30.4
IE	33 200	1 200	35 000	14.5	20.0	-7.9
EL	20 254	60 918	316 243	-19.3	-69.0	-26.7
ES	101 248	17 076	345 491	18.3	10.4	58.7
FR	123 742	4 724	128 524	2.9	-3.3	-0.4
IT	216 476	34 014	1 007 605	-11.3	26.5	17.2
CY	:	:	:	:	:	:
LV	41 153	6 072	13 831	-18.6	-0.3	-10.6
LT	22 665	279	12 777	13.5	1.5	21.2
LU	:	:	:	:	:	:
HU	17 746	6 820	11 826	3.3	18.8	
MT	:	:	:	:	:	:
NL	44 117	76 846	14 082	9.9	36.1	13.5
AT	352 781	67 238	85 607	3.1	-2.7	1.8
PL	44 030	18 307	23 163	31.7	-31.4	-21.1
PT	:	:	:	:	:	:
RO	7 567	416	121 175	8.3	-64.6	103.0
SI	18 174	2 543	36 107	3.9	7.2	4.6
SK	30 433	237	77 318	5.2	-24.0	-11.7
FI	28 574	2 245	13 635	12.0	9.5	88.1
SE	141 825	32 187	57 091	28.9	31.5	32.8
UK	319 587	71 229	1 178 306	27.6	41.2	36.5
NO	21 192	1 946	40 145	4.3	33.9	11.8

(2) DE, CY, LU, MT, PT no data available; DK no data 2007 available

Source: Eurostat ([food_in_porg3](#))

The developments in the individual Member States from 2007 to 2008 differed according to the species (see Table 4). Romania and Finland recorded large increases in the number of organically farmed sheep (103.0% respectively 88.1%), while Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom had the biggest increases of all Member

States for cattle (31.7%, 28.9% and 27.6%). The United Kingdom had also the biggest increase for pigs (41.2%). In Greece, there was a considerable drop in the number of organically reared cattle, pigs and sheep, with the pig numbers decreasing by as much as 69.0%. Latvia saw a negative trend in all three categories too.

Manufacture of organic products: meat and meat products and fruit and vegetables dominate

On the basis of the NACE Rev.2 classification, food manufacturing activities can be grouped as follows: processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products, processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables, manufacture of

vegetable and animal fats and oils, dairy products, grain mill products and starches, beverages, prepared animal feeds and other food products, including, for example, bakery products, tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, etc. (see Table 5).

Table 5: Number of organic processors by type of economic activity, NACE Rev. 2, 2008 (1)

	Meat/ meat products	Fruit/ Vegetables	Vegetable and animal oils/fats	Dairy products	Grain mill products/ starches	Other food products	Beverages	Prepared animal feeds	Total
EU-27	2 445	4 114	2 170	1 278	1 022	6 833	2 126	519	4633
BE	43	74	9	44	32	247	17	4	470
BG	1	16	7	3	0	10	1	0	38
CZ	72	37	1	31	17	96	69	4	327
DK	53	38	5	36	20	122	29	3	306
DE	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
EE	2	9	1	2	9	8	0	0	31
IE	33	85	0	5	9	91	3	1	227
EL	72	304	801	74	27	457	214	56	2005
ES	220	520	297	67	49	865	359	38	2415
FR	391	253	50	180	167	372	248	134	1795
IT	308	1 277	835	333	353	1 871	903	75	2807
CY	:	:	11	:	:	:	3	:	14
LV	3	2		5	1	4	:	:	15
LT	3	3	1	5	6	10	0	3	31
LU	4	6	1	2	4	18	1	3	39
HU	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
MT	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
NL	138	307	57	101	94	571	60	48	1376
AT	318	145	:	117	71	:	:	56	707
PL	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
PT	12	33	23	:	:	2	3	2	75
RO	0	29	2	9		24	2	0	66
SI	10	18	3	5	1	20	:	1	58
SK	5	10	2	7	12	35	3	2	76
FI	33	83	4	15	40	52	0	16	243
SE	71	68	18	25	31	116	16	11	356
UK	650	797	39	212	79	1 842	194	62	2033
NO	107	64	2	38	28	203	4	10	456

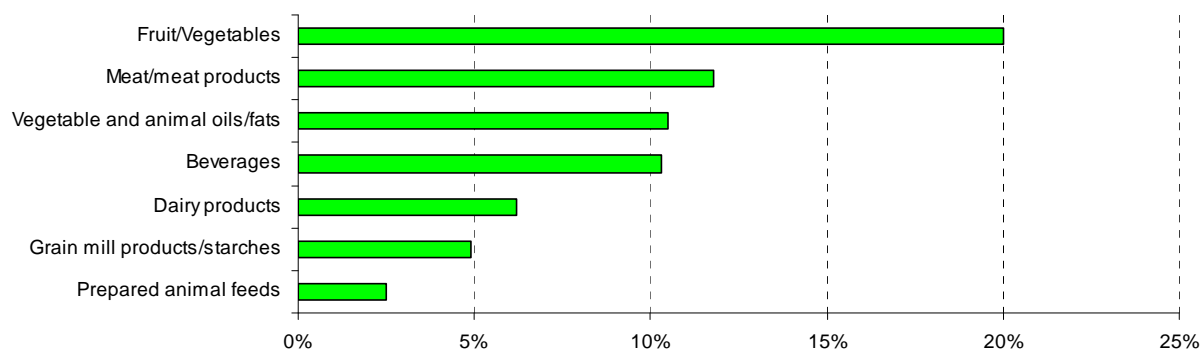
(1) EU-27 estimated; LU data 2004; AT, PT data 2005; MT data 2006; CY data 2007; DE, HU, PL no data available

Source: Eurostat ([food_act3](#))

In 2008, apart from 'Other food products', which include numerous products which are not always specified, most of the processors in EU-27 were engaged in the processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables (20.1%) and the processing and preserving of meat and the production of meat products (11.9%) (see Figure 11). The United Kingdom led in the area of meat and meat

products with 650 operators (26.6% of the EU-27 total), while Italy headed the list of all operators processing and preserving fruit and vegetables (with 1277 operators or 31.2%). Italy was also heavily involved in the manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats, dairy products, grain mill products and beverages.

Figure 11: Organic processors by type of economic activity as a % of all organic processors, 2008, EU-27 (1)

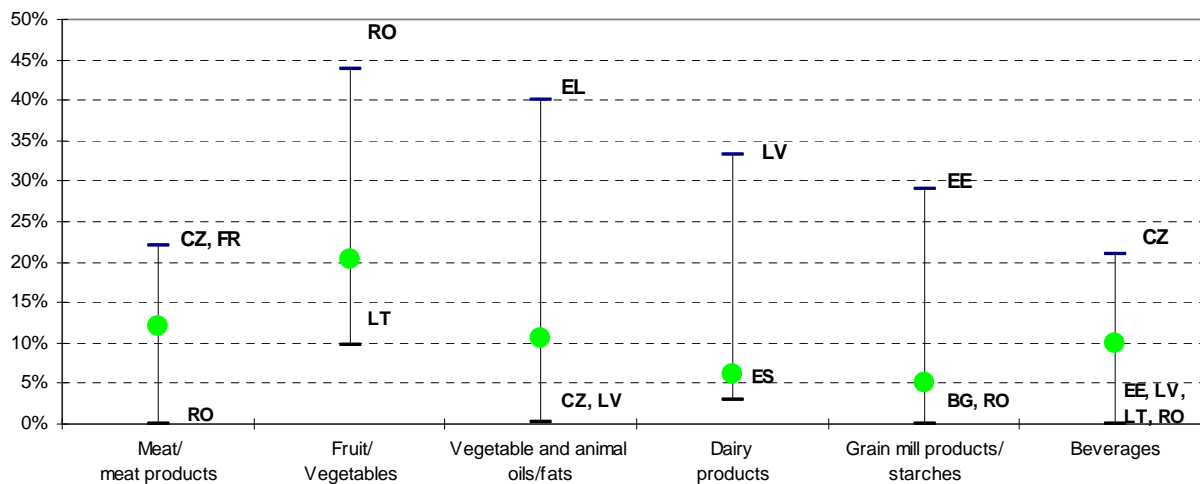


(1) EU-27 estimated; LU data 2004; AT, PT data 2005; MT data 2006, CY data 2007; DE., HU, PL no data available
 Source: Eurostat ([food_act3](#))

Comparing all Member States for which data are available and Norway, there are considerable variations in the situation from one country to another in terms of which is the most important activity at national level. For example, while the processing and preserving of meat and the

production of meat products in 2008 were the most common activities in the Czech Republic and France with 22% each, in Romania the processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables was top of the list with 44% (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Organic processors by type of economic activity, 2008 (2)
 Minimum and maximum levels (either end of vertical line), EU-27 (circle)



(2) EU-27 estimated; LU data 2004; AT, PT data 2005; MT data 2006; IE, CY data 2007; DE., HU, PL no data available
 Source: Eurostat ([food_act3](#))

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

[Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007 \(Art. 36\)](#) and [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 889/2008 \(Art.93\)](#) lay down the detailed rules for the transmission of statistical data on organic production.

DATA SOURCES

The statistical information presented in this publication is drawn from the Eurostat database, available at the Eurostat website.

1. Organic farming statistics

Annual data collection

Data are provided by the Member States and Norway on the basis of a harmonised questionnaire. Up to reference year 2007, data provision was voluntary. From reference year 2008 onwards, data have to be delivered following Council Regulation 834/2007 and Implementing Commission Regulation 889/2008 (see above).

The most recent figures on organic operators are provisional and subject to later revision.

2. Statistics on the structure of agricultural holdings (FSS)

The Farm Structure Survey (FSS) is conducted every 10 years (full scope Agricultural Census) and intermediate surveys (sample based) in between (data are available for the following years: 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2007).

3. Livestock statistics

Annual data collection

TERMINOLOGY

Agricultural holding: used in the Farm Structure Survey (FSS). It is defined as a single unit both technically and economically, which has a single management and which produces agricultural products. The holding may also provide other supplementary (non-agricultural) products and services.

Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA): the total area taken up by arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops and kitchen gardens

Organic farming: can be defined as a method of production which places the highest emphasis on environmental protection and, with regard to livestock production, animal welfare considerations. It avoids or largely reduces the use

of synthetic chemical inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, additives and medicinal products.

Organic area: data on organic area in this publication represent the sum of fully converted areas and areas under conversion, unless otherwise indicated.

Organic operator: any natural or legal person who produces, prepares, imports, exports or deals with organic products.

Organic producer: any natural or legal person who operates an **agricultural holding** involved in producing, packaging and labelling his own organic products.

Organic processor: any natural or legal person who preserves and/or processes organic agricultural produce (including slaughter and butchering of livestock). Packaging and labelling of organic products is also considered to be processing.

Mixed organic operator: operator involved in more than one of the activities, e.g. a producer who is also processing (not only his own products)

NACE Rev.2 classification: Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, Rev. 2

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

EU-27 27 EU Member States

BE	Belgium	BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic	DK	Denmark
DE	Germany	EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland	EL	Greece
ES	Spain	FR	France
IT	Italy	CY	Cyprus
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: not available

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Agriculture statistics"

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/data/database>

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More information about "Agriculture statistics"

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/introduction>

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